

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5734

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

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AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWIAT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

USOECN PARIS

USEC BRUSSELS 884

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SUBJ: ARAB BOYCOTT: NEWSPAPER INTERVIEW WITH COMMISSIONER

GENERAL MAHGOUB

SUMMARY: THE LOCAL "DAILY STAR"'S AUG 12 EDITION
CONTAINS AN INTERVIEW WITH ISRAELI BOYCOTT OFFICE COM-
MISSIONER GENERAL MAHGOUB, IN WHICH THE LATTER SPEAKS
RATHER CANDIDLY OF VARIOUS PROBLEMS SUCH AS A) RETALIA-
TION AGAINST FIRMS COOPERATING WITH THE BOYCOTT, B)
PRESSURES EXERTED ON THE BOYCOTT OFFICE BY INTERESTED
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PARTIES, C) OCCASIONAL RESISTANCE BY SOME ARAB COUNTRIES

TO APPLY BOYCOTT, D) PROBLEMS OF APPLYING BOYCOTT IN
A MANNER THAT IS NOT SELF DEFEATING. END SUMMARY

1. THE LOCAL "DAILY STAR"'S AUGUST 12 EDITION CONTAINS
AN INTERVIEW WITH ISRAELI BOYCOTT OFFICE COMMISSIONER
GENERAL MAHGOUB, IN WHICH THE LATTER SPEAKS RATHER
CANDIDLY ON CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE BOYCOTT AS NOTED
BELOW.

2. AUGUST 23 MEETING IN CAIRO: ONE OF THE PURPOSES OF
THE FORTHCOMING BOYCOTT OFFICE MEETING IN CAIRO ON
AUGUST 23 WILL BE TO COUNTER THE WORK OF THE NEW ANTI-
BOYCOTT OFFICE SET UP BY THE ISRAELIS TO FIND OUT ABOUT
ARAB BOYCOTT MEASURES AND TO COUNTER THEM BEFORE THEY
ARE PUT INTO EFFECT.

3. PUBLICITY: IT IS PLANNED TO MAINTAIN STRICT SEC-
RECY ABOUT THOSE COUNTRIES THAT HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM
THE BOYCOTT LIST UPON AGREEING TO COOPERATE WITH THE
BOYCOTT OFFICE. THIS WILL BE DONE IN ORDER TO PROTECT
THEM FROM COUNTER MEASURES ON THE ISRAELIE SIDE.

4. THE ISRAELI-EEC AGREEMENT: THIS AGREEMENT WILL BE
REVIEWED IN ORDER TO DETERMINE ITS INFLUENCE ON THE
BOYCOTT AND TO ATTEMPT TO PREVENT THE FLOW OF ISRAELI
GOODS TO THE ARAB MARKETS THROUGH WESTERN EUROPE.

5. DELETIONS FROM THE BOYCOTT LIST: ABOUT 100 FIRMS
ARE BEING CONSIDERED FOR DELETION FORM THE BOYCOTT LIST,
MOST OF THEM HAVING PROVEDED NECESSARY REQUESTED DOCUMENT-
ATION.

6. OUTSIDE PRESSURES: MAHGOUB SPOKE OF PRESSURES BEING
PUT ON HIS OFFICE TO MAKE EXCEPTIONS. HE CLAIMS HE
HAS BEEN ABLE TO REIST THIS, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT HE
HAS NOT BEEN COMPLETELY SUCCESSFUL. MOREOVER, THERE IS
THE IMPLICATION THAT THIS PRESSURE IS COMING FROM ARAB
SOURCES.

7 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BOYCOTT: MAHGOUB NOTED THAT THE
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NAMES OF COMPANIES ON THE BOYCOTT LIST ARE DISTRIBUTED
TO THE ECONOMIC MINISTERS OF THE ARAB COUNTRY MEMBERS
AND THAT THEY ARE CONVEYED TO BANKS, CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE
AND INDUSTRY AND PUBLISHED IN OFFICIAL GAZETTES. (INAS-
MUCH AS THE ABOVE PROCEDURE APPLIES BOTH THE COMPANIES
PLACED AND TAKEN OFF THE LIST,IT CAN BE SEEN HOW DIF-
FICULT IT WOULD BE TO MAINTAIN SECRECY WITH RESPECT TO
COMPANIES THAT HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM THE LIST,

PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE
REQUIREMENT)

8. ARAB COUNTRY RESISTANCE: MAHGOUB CANDIDLY ADMITTED
THAT SOME ARAB COUNTRIES AT TIMES REFUSED TO COOPERATE
WITH THE BOYCOTT AND THAT, IN ORDER TO AVOID EMBARRASS-
MENT, THE ISSUE WAS OFTEN NOT BROUGHT TO A HEAD.

9. THE BOYCOTT AND SELF INTEREST: MAHGOUB STATED THAT
THE BOYCOTT HAD TO BE APPLIED WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF SELF
INTEREST. THUS, JOURNALISTS WERE ADMITTED TO ARAB
COUNTRIES AFTER THEY HAD VISITED ISRAEL. OTHERWISE THEY
WOULD BE REPORTING FROM ONLY ONE SIDE.
GODLEY

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